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A Retrospective

EXHIBITION

of

DRAWINGS

by

HENRY MOORE

ARTS COUNCIL

1948

Foreword

The suggestion to make a small exhibition of Henry Moore drawings originated with two University undergraduates at Magdalene College, Cambridge, who approached the artist for his help. This was gladly given. The artist offered the collection to the Arts Council as a travelling exhibition, after its first showing in Cambridge. The Council is greatly indebted to Mrs. Irina Moore for the loan of the drawings from her collection, and to Dr. Henry Roland for the loan of his watercolour (No. 30). Thanks are also due to Mr. A. D. B. Sylvester for writing the Introduction.

Introduction

A DRAWING by Henry Moore does not resemble the object it represents. That, however, does not make it an abstraction or a symbol or a piece of gratuitous deformation. It stands or falls by its realism—by which I mean its power to evoke the physical properties of the object—and by its poetry—by which I mean its power to endow the object with imaginative meaning.

Among the physical properties of things, one has always attracted Moore's attention more than the others. That property is massiveness. He tries to show us how massive the human figure is by re-creating it in a sign in which we can "read" the volume of the figure, and become more aware of that volume than we are when we look at the figure itself. In that sign, the forms are both bulkier in mass and simpler in contour than the forms of the "real" figure are. These distortions have been made in order to bring out to us the weight and majesty of the "real" figure. Now this much distortion and simplification takes place in Moore's drawings from life, which are not particularly "modern," not much unlike the appearance of things, and so scarcely seem to need explaining. The point is, though, that the less naturalistic, more "difficult," drawings are the result of exactly the same process, carried a stage further. That is to say, when Moore so distorts and simplifies the human figure that his sign for it reminds us of boulders, monoliths at Stonehenge, or a range of mountains, he has succeeded in making us feel the massiveness of the figure with far more conviction than we would otherwise have felt it. To emphasise this property of the human figure, Moore is obliged to ignore certain others. But because this property is an important one, and because it is revealed so fully, these drawings are more realistic than many

drawings which set out to reveal a wider range of the object's properties, but reveal not one of them with enough intensity to make us feel more deeply about the object or look more closely at it than we did before we saw these drawings.

The property of the human figure that Moore singles out is not always massiveness. Sometimes it is a taut, muscular tension, and in these cases he often makes the figure look like a highly elaborate bone-form. At other times, it is the very opposite of massiveness and weight; it is the figure's upward thrust, its lightness and vitality. When this is what he is trying to express, he pierces the figure with holes, because, the more that space circulates within an object, the lighter it becomes.

What of the poetic feeling that informs Moore's interpretations of the human figure? Generally it is a sense of mystery and time-lessness. A boulder-like massiveness makes woman appear "older than the rocks," presents us with an intimation of eternity. A bone-like tension recalls the "skull beneath the skin," scattered bones in endless deserts. A hollow or a hole evokes the mystery of the cave and of the womb. These are the variations; the theme is the relationship of man to the earth.

A. D. B. SYLVESTER

Catalogue

No.	*Title*	*Date*	*Medium*	*Size*
1	Seated Figure (drawing from life)	1928	*Indian ink & brush*	22" × 14"
2	Seated Figure (drawing from life)	1929	*Chalk & wash*	20" × 11"
3	Half Figure (drawing from life)	1930	*Oil paint on paper*	13½" × 16"
4	'Figure' (drawing for metal sculpture)	1931	*Oil paint on paper*	18½" × 8½"
5	Standing Figures (drawing from life)	1932	*Pen & ink*	17" × 14"
6	Head (drawing from life)	1932	*Brush & wash*	17" × 14"
7	Standing Figures (drawing for sculpture)	1932	*Pen & wash*	10" × 21"
8	Mother and Child	1933	*Pen & water-colour*	14½" × 10½"
9	Mother and Child	1933	*Pen & wash*	12" × 10"
10	Reclining Figure (drawing for sculpture)	1933	*Pen & wash*	14½" × 14"
11	Ideas for metal sculpture	1934	*Pen & wash*	20" × 12¾"
12	Drawing	1935	*Pen & wash*	15" × 15"

No.	Title	Date	Medium	Size
13	Reclining Figure (drawing for stone sculpture)	1936	*Chalk & wash*	20″ × 15″
14	Reclining Figure (drawing for stone sculpture	1936	*Chalk & wash*	14½″ × 10½″
15	Drawing for Sculpture	1937	*Chalk & water-colour*	16″ × 10″
16	Drawing	1937	*Chalk & water-colour*	22″ × 15″
17	Ideas for metal sculpture	1937	*Water-colour*	22″ × 15″
18	Monoliths	1937	*Pen & water-colour*	10¾″ × 7¼″
19	Reclining Figures (drawing for lead sculpture)	1939	*Pen & wash*	15″ × 11″
20	Ideas for sculpture	1939	*Chalk & pencil*	10″ × 17″
21	Drawing (sketch for lithograph)	1939	*Water-colour*	14¾″ × 12″
22	'September 3rd, 1939'	1939	*Chalk, water-colour & pen*	15½″ × 12″
23	War Scenes	1940	*Water-colour & pen*	10¾″ × 14½″
24	Shelter Drawing	1940	*Water-colour & pen*	11″ × 10¾″
25	Coal-mine Drawing	1942	*Chalk, pen & water-colour*	12″ × 22″
26	Two Women Winding Wool	1948	*Chalk, pen & water-colour*	22½″ × 25¼″
27	Two Figures	1948	*Chalk & water-colour*	22″ × 24″
28	Two Women Bathing a Child	1948	*Chalk, pen & water-colour*	27¼″ × 22½″
29	Seated Woman	1948	*Chalk & water-colour*	27¾″ × 22½″
30	Seated Figure (study for stone sculpture)	1948	*Chalk & water-colour*	23¾″ × 22½″

All drawings are the property of Mrs. Irina Moore except no. 30 which is lent by Dr. Henry M. Roland.

Other Arts Council Exhibitions

OLD MASTER DRAWINGS FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE EARL OF LEICESTER, HOLKHAM HALL

SOME BRITISH DRAWINGS FROM THE COLLECTION OF SIR ROBERT WITT, C.B.E., D.LITT.

PICASSO

55 Lithographs

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THOMAS HENNELL

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